

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Celia De Los Santos M.Ed.  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Mittie A Pullam Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3200 Madrid Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Brownsville State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 78520-8071

County Cameron County

Telephone (956) 547-3700 Fax (956) 350-2880

Web site/URL https://pullamelementary.weebly.com E-mail mamarquez@bisd.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Rene Gutierrez E-mail rene.gutierrez@bisd.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Brownsville Independent School District Tel. (956) 548-8000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Eddie Garcia  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 35 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 7 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 52 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	76	75	151
<b>K</b>	59	51	110
<b>1</b>	51	65	116
<b>2</b>	63	47	110
<b>3</b>	50	57	107
<b>4</b>	57	66	123
<b>5</b>	66	57	123
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	422	418	840

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0.6 % Asian
  - 0.1 % Black or African American
  - 97.4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 1.8 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 15%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	30
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	100
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	130
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	846
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish, Asian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 42 %  
354 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 77 %

Total number students who qualify: 648

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %  
88 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>14</u> Autism                 | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>24</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance  | <u>44</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>9</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	42
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Pullam Elementary strives to create an educational setting that promotes raising student achievement and facilitates an environment of lifelong learning among students, parents, and staff.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Pullam modes of operation have evolved during the 2020-2021 school year. Initially, administrators and office staff were required to report to campus to commence the school year and deploy technical resources and support. Teachers and students began the school year by following the remote learning model, which began in the spring of 2020.

Students were welcomed without internet and/or a technology device to receive face-to-face instruction as part of the district’s Soft Reopening Plan.

This allowed faculty and students to return to face-to-face instruction. Due to the low attendance of students on campus, teachers were given the opportunity to rotate with colleagues and teach from home in order to minimize personnel on campus. By the end November, the final phase called for full operation to welcome students who wished to return for face-to-face instruction.

A hybrid model evolved in which teachers and instructional aides served students simultaneously through in-person and distance learning. COVID safety protocols were followed throughout the entire school year to protect students, faculty and staff.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.



## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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“On the Border by the Sea” is where one will find Mittie A. Pullam Elementary, a close-knit community school in Brownsville, Texas. Pullam Elementary bears the name of Mittie Anita Pullam, a teacher who helped found Brownsville’s Frederick Douglas School to serve African American children in 1947, during the days of segregation. Mrs. Pullam’s legacy of standing as a pillar for education continues as teachers and staff strive to inspire all students to reach their academic goals and achieve higher standards of achievement through a college-going culture.

Pullam, a Title I school, opened its doors to 390 students in the fall of 2009 and has experienced steady enrollment increase over the years, reaching its capacity in 2019 of over 850 students. Its population includes a diversity of cultures and ethnicities; predominately consisting of 97.38% Hispanic students, but also including American Indian, Asian, White, and African American students. High expectations set a standard at Pullam, where teachers serve a diverse community of learners with the highest percentage of At-Risk students at 78%, 42% English Language Learners and 11% meeting the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

As an honor roll school and NCUST Bronze recipient, stakeholder dedication to its diverse population of students is seen in the high standards of student achievement. Pullam has consistently scored above district and state standards in state academic assessments, receiving exemplary status throughout the years. This success can be attributed to best practices utilized by teachers, weekly submission of student data tracker, data analysis meetings, vertical and horizontal alignment, communication and collaboration amongst personnel and parents, as well as the supplemental programs designed to target the academic and emotional needs of students. Among these programs are Bilingual Education, Migrant, Gifted and Talented, 504/Dyslexia, Special Education, Response to Intervention, and after school tutorials.

Instruction at Pullam is novel-based, starting in pre-kindergarten. Discussions and conversations about the novel piques students’ interests, leading to high student engagement. Teachers utilize scaffolding, differentiation and help students make connections to personalize their learning. The Bilingual program incorporates technology to promote oral development in English Learners. The acquisition of academic language and bilingual supports are part of daily instruction. Small group instruction and pullouts are part of the early intervention program. Interventions are tailored to meet the educational needs of struggling students and to close foundational gaps. Students with learning disabilities also find support through special education services such as resource, inclusion, Behavior Intervention and Structure for Life units.

Successes at Pullam are also reflected in the STEAM program that encompasses robotics, drama, maker space, musicals, coding, and Greenpower STEAM Challenge. In addition to STEAM program, students participate in Destination Imagination, Book Club, Brainsville, Project Based Learning, Accelerated Reader, academic competitions, and Science Fair. Pullam’s community involvement with the local museum has brought the LEGO Studio Mini Maker to Pullam students. Community stakeholders have helped create outdoor “Little Libraries” to provide students alternate settings to enjoy reading. At Pullam, students are encouraged to participate in community activities such as local sponsored races and public performances by estudiantina, choir and rock band at local venues.

In a city where students can experience SpaceX in their own backyard, the challenge of teaching through a pandemic was conquered because of the engaging activities planned for them. Students connect virtually to enjoy educational activities such as the viewing of the SpaceX tests and launches, and the journey of Perseverance to Mars. These activities created excitement where a screen between the teacher and a student is not an obstacle but a way to stay socially and emotionally connected. Various virtual dress up activities created a fun way to interact with the teacher. The motto “Pullam Strong” has been embraced during the pandemic and leads to the belief that, “with unity, ‘virtually’ anything can be done!”

Pullam’s educational programs never ceased through the pandemic. Moreover, it allowed for the creative minds of Pullam educators to shift gears. Programs like “Bid Red Hug” transitioned to Big Red Facebook Live where students who meet set criteria are randomly selected via a spinning wheel. As can be seen,

Pullam has taken the challenge by providing virtual learning using several platforms to deliver instruction and maintaining communication with parents and students.

Learning has continued, not only academically but through social-emotional support as well. At a time where mental health has been such a great concern, school counselors have regular student and family check-ins to ensure that all is well and to offer help as needed. The open-door policy culture remains consistent virtually as it would in a normal year. With all that the pandemic brings, through it all what remains is for stakeholders to have hope and “Perseverance” as it defines the mission of Pullam.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

This year began with the implementation of many changes for students and educators. When planning for the beginning of the school year, a school wide deployment of devices, backpacks, school supplies, textbooks, novels, teacher-created student packets, manipulatives, and supplemental resources was scheduled to facilitate remote instruction. Pre-Kinder teachers designed a digital wall, kinder teachers met in small group rotations, first grade teachers pre-recorded their lessons providing on-demand access, and second through fifth grade teachers provided daily remote instruction for all subjects. In addition, schedules incorporated daily intervention groups to ensure opportunities for teacher assistance. Instruction continues to be data driven based on weekly analyzes of formal and informal assessments, fluency, and assignments during planning meetings. The delivery of daily instruction incorporates depth of knowledge questions, anchor charts, digital resources, and interactive journals to acquire foundational skills.

State and district assessments have undergone noticeable changes with online learning. Circle Phonological Awareness Language and Literacy Screener (CPALLS) and Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)/Tejas Lee assessments that were administered in person had to transition to video conferencing. Furthermore, district benchmarks and six weeks checkpoints went online, along with necessary accommodations provided to students with individualized education plans. In turn, growth plans were created for struggling students to address weaknesses through the 3-Tier Intervention model to guide instruction. Additionally, Pullam incorporated a comprehensive technology-based literacy program extending learning for advanced students and accelerating learning for struggling students.

The foundation of Pullam’s rigorous curriculum are Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels. Pullam applies a novel-based approach to Reading through critical thinking questioning strategies when discussing the content and related TEKS with students. Teachers guide students’ development with novel matrices, interactive reading journals, and hands-on activities as they acquire reading skill-based knowledge. Grade levels address their appropriate TEKS through explicit instruction, modeling for students, and frequently checking for understanding to identify student’s strengths and weaknesses. Prescriptive computer-assisted programs have been incorporated to target individualized instruction. Novel-based instruction, mentor texts, and sample pieces are also embedded into writing instruction to facilitate student writing products.

Mathematics lessons focus on multi-step problem-solving questions taught through the use of a variety of graphic organizers. Teacher collaboration involves creating lessons, comparing successes and areas of improvement. Pullam follows the district scope and sequence when planning lessons and activities, prioritizing the introduction of TEKS readiness standards. Math facts are reinforced through oral activities, teacher created materials, interactive applications, and classroom task cards. Supplemental programs are used from 2nd-5th for spiraling reviews. In addition, a variety of resources such as manipulatives, web-based programs for math support and acceleration, and interactive journals are implemented to differentiate instruction. While small groups take place, the remaining students connect to computer-prescribed individualized lessons. Transitioning to remote instruction has brought forth a new set of teaching resources through educational videos, websites with digital manipulatives, instructional videos, and interactive web-based programs with integrated tutorials.

The Science curriculum at Pullam follows the district TEKS aligned Scope and Sequence. In addition to the district adopted textbook, instruction is supplemented with web-based instructional programs and hands-on activities. Students receive 45 minutes of daily inquiry-based instruction, exposing them to exploring and discovering nature and fostering a love of science early on. As a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) school, Pullam is focused on keeping students engaged in science exploration and hands-on discovery. Located at the pinnacle of space exploration, we pique their curiosity through presentations from SpaceX, a local astronomical society, and the local children’s museum. Star gazing and innovative science activities are performed in the school laboratory and backyard. Students are provided opportunities to engage in project-based learning activities such as creating designs with 3D printers and embroidery, campus science fair projects, robotics, and live specimens targeted for each grade level. In

partnership with wildlife organizations, local zoo provides inquiry-based webinars.

The overall focus of the social studies program at Pullam is to provide students with the skills necessary to make informed decisions, have good character, respect others and develop a sense of civic responsibility. The curriculum is designed for students to strengthen their understanding of becoming well-rounded individuals that know their rights, the role of their government and responsibilities as citizens of this nation. Students follow their grade appropriate TEKS and as a school recognize national holidays through various activities. Lower grades have a community garden where they learn to cooperate and work together. Upper grades research Christmas around the world, exposing them to different cultures. Hispanic research and Career Day provide experiences of future academic pursuits through small business owners and city and state representatives. In partnership with the local university, students vote in city and national mock elections and student council elections. Yearly activities include annual food and sock drive, cultural festivities, and recycling programs that provide students with a sense of belonging.

**1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

**1b. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

Pullam Elementary offers half and full day PK3 and full day PK4 rigorous early childhood program to prepare students for a successful academic future. The high-quality curriculum offered at Pullam focuses on expanding a child's social emotional development, language communication and fine motor skills. The curricula also emphasize the high standards of learning through emergent literacy reading and writing, mathematics, science, social studies, fine arts, physical development and technology. In order to keep our high standards and meet the challenges brought about by COVID-19, modes of instruction were adapted. Students are assigned activities electronically and work is submitted online as they build their learning portfolio. Students are assessed weekly via video conferencing to progress monitor their mastery of the weekly concepts. Students who show lack of progress receive small group personalized targeted intervention remotely. Parents are able to facilitate student's academic growth at home. In order to keep students engaged during online learning, time is provided for brain breaks such as songs, dances, games, and activities all geared towards academics, student needs, and student attention levels. PK3 and PK4 standards are vertically aligned to help support students and identify needs that can help ensure student success, now and in the future, through co-planning meetings. Lessons and instructional year are planned based on student data. This helps identify focus areas as well as support students who are ready to move on to more advanced concepts. Early childhood education is the heart of Pullam's academic success. As teacher's strive to build a strong academic foundation for all students, it has become evident that the concepts mastered in PK3 and PK4 along with language opportunities, higher order questioning and alignment across the grade levels has helped ensure students have the best chance for success today and into their future.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Other curricula that enrich the education program and acquisition of essential skills and knowledge in pre-K through fifth grade are music, library, counseling, and physical education classes. Due to the pandemic, these programs have adapted their lessons to keep classes as normal as possible. The TEKS based activities and lessons are diligently planned and implemented using newly acquired knowledge and skills, incorporating technology to create video lessons to keep students engaged and motivated.

The music education program, which is held 45 minutes bi-weekly exceeds the school's curriculum of music appreciation, singing, and playing of instruments. Third through fifth grade students are given the opportunity to partake in extracurricular activities such as rock band, estudiantina, guitar ensemble, and choir. Students showcase their talents at several school and community events. Additionally, students collaborate to produce two musical productions yearly, one at the end of each semester.

Technology integration is embedded into daily instruction. Pullam has a 1:1 device ratio, which allows teachers to instruct students in digital citizenship, keyboarding techniques, use of digital tools, applying

online features, use various search strategies, and developing critical thinking skills. In addition to online components of district-adopted textbooks, Pullam uses a number of prescriptive web-based educational programs for reading, math, writing and science classes. The TEKS correlated programs assign pathways that target academic weaknesses and teachers are able to assign activities based on skills taught to supplement instruction that students can work on asynchronously.

Literacy is enriched at the newly renovated library; a resourceful space where the librarian leads book talks, engages in story time, makes book recommendations, operates different databases, runs the book club, and ensures eBooks are readily available to everyone. Students attend a 45-minute class bi-weekly, with additional flexible scheduling allowing book checkouts as needed. To further enhance the library setting, the “Little Library” concept was incorporated to an adjoining courtyard, providing students reading materials in a unique setting. This addition was pivotal during the pandemic because it created an open area where in-person students could safely enjoy something to read. The goal is to instill the love for reading through different modes and settings.

Pullam’s Guidance and Counseling Program is a fundamental part of the overall student educational plan. Counselors work hard to develop basic conflict resolution skills, self-confidence, and motivation within all children. Bullying prevention and awareness, decision-making skills, goal setting, interpersonal effectiveness, career exploration and a college ready mindset have become part of the Pullam culture. Furthermore, counselors are available for individual and small group counseling to help students meet their emotional needs by teaching coping skills.

The Physical Education program at Pullam is designed to add a daily health component for all students. From “Healthy Heart Mondays” to the many structured activities, all students learn to appreciate what a healthy lifestyle should resemble. Students acquire skills and knowledge required for lifelong physical education and healthy habits. Aside from daily lessons, students also participate in extracurricular activities such as volleyball, soccer, basketball, and running events.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

Mittie A. Pullam Elementary stakeholders work as a check and balance to take on more active roles that ensure students are progressing at a steady rate. Furthermore, Pullam instructional aides receive professional development to equip them with tools needed to support teachers in addressing low performing students in literacy and mathematics. Pullam provides innovative lessons for all students with instructional design embedded in technology, in line with the adaptive learning method.

Early identification of students needing instructional support is crucial in maximizing students’ success rates. Response to Intervention (RTI) process is utilized complementing the use of color-coded data walls that identify each subgroup’s interventions. This is immediately followed by weekly team meetings to design an action plan that allows collaborators to tie in assessment with creating innovative TEKS focused lessons for rigorous remediation. Support for students and subpopulations scoring at least 10% below their peers is provided through targeted small group pull-outs. Tier 2 addresses fundamental literacy skill gaps by offering student-driven and teacher-directed personalized instruction for students considered at-risk of “falling through the cracks.” Saturday Academies set forth intensive needs-based instruction targeting Tier 3 interventions. Once insufficient gains are determined, the RTI Committee, including classroom teacher, coordinator, counselor, and nurse, develop the course of action leading to screenings for learning deficiencies.

Special populations participate in general education subsequent with students’ individualized education plan tackling performance-based tasks to enrich and elicit verbalization of thought processes. Dyslexia students are offered 45 minutes of specialized, systematic instruction followed by inclusion to support early literacy development. Structure for Life (SFL) offers applied real-world scenarios and individualized lessons employing visuals and a light-sensory friendly

classroom including alternative seating. A deep-seated community and parent support system offers exposure to various cultural experiences. Equipped with its very own sensory room that serves as a therapeutic space with an array of individualized sensory input, SFL helps students learn calming and focusing strategies to better prepare for constructive learning and interaction. Pullam's Behavioral Intervention (BI) unit prepares students to approach daily social skills through implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) used to ascertain positive redirection thus preventing negative behaviors. With a population of 42.1%, English Learners' (ELs) needs are addressed by highly qualified bilingual teachers utilizing Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Oral language is cultivated by providing visuals, student-created anchor charts, opportunities for Think-Pair-Share, online journals with real-time feedback, and Gradual Release of Responsibility (I do, we do, you do).

Gifted and Talented (GT) students are addressed through Texas Performance Standards Project (TPSP) thematic proposals, Project-Based Learning (PBL), Coding Club, Robotics Club, Brainsville Inventor Fair, and Greenpower STEAM Challenge fostering engineering and collaboration. Technology integration is at the forefront of the delivery of instruction providing opportunities for nurturing creativity through 3D printing, green-screen projects, and video productions.

Pullam's teachers attend advanced technology training and participate in lesson studies equipping them with the proficiency to adapt lessons to meet and surpass student needs. Consideration is taken to address the different factors students bring to the classroom by addressing whole child development.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Pullam Elementary continues to be its students' home away from home, in spite of school closures and remote learning. The school year began with remote instruction for all. As the COVID-19 situation continued to evolve, steps were taken at a district level and Pullam re-opened for in-person instruction. Teachers created an inclusive environment for both in-person and remote learning students that engaged them in interactive activities to allow for all to share their learning through videos and pictures to the Pullam community.

One of the goals for Pullam was to provide a sense of normalcy and continuity to create a safe learning environment. Various campus wide activities remained in place or were modified to keep students engaged in daily participation that contribute to students' academic successes. Some of these activities included virtual dress up weeks, classroom awards assemblies, and virtual fieldtrips. Pullam has drive-through celebrations such as treats for Halloween, individual pies for Thanksgiving, wrapped toys for Christmas, cupcakes for Dr. Seuss' birthday and goodie baskets for Easter. In addition, the principal rewards students' hard work and dedication weekly, by way of "Big Red Live". Teachers submit the names of students who log in every day and complete all assignments in a timely manner. One student is randomly selected using a computerized spinning wheel. "Big Red Live" is streamed via the campus's social media platforms for the Pullam community. The winner receives a gift basket delivered to them at home or in the classroom by Big Red and pictures are posted on the school website and social media accounts.

Student's emotional growth is nurtured through counselor presentations based on the district adopted character development program. This program addresses topics such as coping with anxiety and frustration, interpersonal skills, bullying prevention, kindness, tolerance, time management, friendship, and empathy. A bi-weekly presentation for each class allows students to develop better relationships with their peers and create a solid, climate and culture on campus.

The principal, administrative team, teachers and support staff continue to provide students with a positive environment by making them feel like part of a big family and, thus, celebrating normally scheduled school events with them. These events show the enormous support stakeholders from this community provide for Pullam. Every event has had tremendous success that can be attributed to nothing more than how Pullam families pull together in forming such a close knit educational family.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

At Pullam, parent and community engagement is critical in maintaining a positive and successful school climate and culture. The trust and respect that one finds at Pullam Elementary embraces a system of collective responsibility in nurturing student achievement. The school year begins with "Meet the Teacher Night" where the premise is that parental involvement is connected to student success. From the onset, a call for parent support sets the foundation of communication for the school year and beyond. School activities such as holiday parades, school carnival, lunch with parents, and Grandparent's Day bring the school community together for an enjoyable time. The school's parent liaison organizes weekly parent meetings that provide information about various topics related to school achievement and the well-being of the student.

Communication is provided in the family's home language for opportunities to share in their child's learning and development. The school's newsletters and website inform families of activities, policies, news, and events. Currently, the utilization of social media platforms and video-chatting services are instrumental in keeping families engaged and connected to their child's progress and success. Parents are always welcomed with a smile at Pullam and regarded as instrumental to the academic and social development of its students.

Community engagement serves as a means for the school and community to work cohesively in providing our students with opportunities to excel in and out of the classroom.

Local first responders participate in events such as an annual Veterans Day Parade and Red Ribbon Week. Neighborhood restaurants consistently support faculty during Teacher Appreciation Week as well as providing estudiantina members a platform to perform during the city's annual Charro Days festivities. Contributions made by nearby businesses continually support families in need. A local club assists Special Education students in the form of Christmas toy donations and field trips to a local movie theatre. A new collaboration with an astronomical society has provided students with virtual presentations and participation in podcasts related to the exploration of the universe. Community members participate in Career Day and Principal for a Day. Student council representatives, who are sworn into office by a federal judge, spearhead an annual Sock and Slipper Drive, which benefits elderly community members. Together with community partners, schoolwide fundraisers promote school spirit and fund various school programs. Pullam recognizes the value of a thriving relationship between family and community to ensure every student's success.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Pullam Elementary is a tight-knit family that consists of dedicated teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians, and cafeteria staff led by a resilient administrative team. "No" or "That can't be done" are words that are rarely heard in the halls of Pullam. All effort is made to fulfill teacher requests in needs and wants to benefit student success and maximize learning. This past year, teachers were faced with the most unimaginable challenge: teaching students from their homes during a pandemic.

Fortunately, the Pullam administration had envisioned a future of being able to provide each student with an electronic device for college readiness. This vision was made a reality by gradually purchasing iPads and Chromebooks over the past three years. In anticipation of possible school closures due to COVID-19, teachers were provided with iPads and laptops to maximize online instruction. The Friday before Spring Break 2020, administration authorized the release of an electronic device per student to access enrichment online activities during the break. This move was in preparation for the next phase of school instruction. Teachers working with professional learning community (PLC) faced the steep technology learning curve with an open mind and determination. PLC members who were technologically savvy supported one another throughout this transition. Teachers had necessary tools at their disposal on the school website to assist in creating interactive lessons for students. At the onset of distance learning, teachers attended technology training to assist in transitioning lessons for remote learning. Online learning platforms kept parents informed of their child's progress and provided a channel for communication between parents and teachers.

During the pandemic, Pullam administrators kept in contact with teachers and scheduled weekly video conferences to specifically address unique challenges and provide support. Teacher wellness was recognized with the purchase of new computer chairs and teacher appreciation family meals, which strengthened the sense of community and value. The challenges experienced in remote teaching varied by grade level, and teachers' knowledge and experience with technology. Challenges included: struggling to get students to engage with coursework, seeking professional development training for online teaching, and unfamiliarity with online platforms. Administrators aided teachers by communicating with families experiencing technical difficulties. Counselors assisted students facing emotional challenges. The effort to support and commend teachers remained constant throughout.

The Pullam hashtag, #PULLAMSTRONG, reflects the resilience that has been evident across the campus. With unwavering support from administration, Pullam has collectively emerged as a leader in academic excellence.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The very foundation of Pullam's school leadership philosophy can be found within three simple ideals: hire the best; supply all needs; and step out of the way. The mitigating factor that binds these together into an effective process is the concurrent development of a sense of teamwork among all stakeholders, to the extent that all believe and understand that each and every contribution is necessary and important to the overall success of the campus.

At Pullam, the deeper understanding is that one role is no more important than another in the grand scheme of its mission. Staff is driven by a common goal to reach success for the most important stakeholders, the students. Duties assigned are structured to provide a mesh of support. The dean supports academic endeavors across the campus. Assistant principals share operational and academic duties to assist the principal and dean. The principal oversees all of this as instructional leader.

Campus leadership understands the new reality of COVID-19 and how it affects the education of its students. Teachers and students face the brunt of this challenge daily. At Pullam, administrators and support personnel are charged with helping to ease the tensions and frustrations that inevitably arise from this type of learning environment. It is not uncommon for campus administrators and counselors to step into a class to virtually cover for a teacher that is absent or that simply needs to attend to other student groups.

Academics has always been an important part of what Pullam is, and to that end, administration always strives to ensure that student needs and goals are addressed and met. “Student of the Week” is promoted weekly to recognize hard work by students across all grade levels. The PE staff promotes their own “Student of the Week” recognition for efforts in the health and fitness programs. Additionally, Pullam continued with extracurricular programs including Destination Imagination, Spelling Bee, and Chess and modified them to occur virtually. Through all this, administration and staff hold regular holiday drive-by events to maintain a sense of community for the virtual as well as in-person students.

These events and activities are purposely designed to communicate that Pullam is still one big family and always strives to achieve success. Leadership can be found within all metrics of campus life. It manifests itself as a representation of many parts that make up the whole. It’s what Pullam is!

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

The Pullam Elementary faculty and staff serve an inclusive group of students and families with diverse needs and backgrounds. Teachers and support staff make sure they become familiar with students by having close communication with parents or guardians. It is through this constant communication that Pullam educators get to know about the specific needs of each student and ensure that all needs are being met. The administrative team is out in the halls on a daily basis, becoming familiar with students, and making sure that all students feel safe and are treated with respect.

Pullam Elementary is fortunate to have students with different cultural backgrounds. The majority of the students are Hispanic, but there are students of African American, Asian, and Middle Eastern backgrounds. Teachers use technology tools to ensure that students can understand what they are learning in English. They use translation apps in the students’ native language on their electronic devices. Teachers use preferential seating so that they are able to reinforce the content by showing students visuals, to help them build critical bridges between their native language and the English language. They also ensure practice through repetition so that the students learn content for the long-term. Teachers also value their students’ families and want them to feel part of their class. It is not uncommon for teachers to learn key phrases in students’ native languages to communicate with students and families, which makes them feel included and valued.

In the classroom, teachers follow the district curriculum and supplement it with literature or activities that make it more culturally relevant for their students. They invite students to use their background knowledge to make connections and share ideas or experiences that makes the curriculum more meaningful for them. Teachers ensure that they provide a safe and inclusive learning environment when it comes to classroom discussions. They build their students’ character by helping them see that every individual student is unique and has their own perspective about events that happen in the real world. Classroom discussions include current events and social

movements that allow students to express their different points of view and use critical thinking skills to form their own opinions. Counselors also teach students about tolerance and acceptance of each other's views. They encourage students to be culturally sensitive and to socially accept one another because each student is an essential part of the Pullam family.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Many factors contribute to Pullam's success. The staff has always been self-driven to perform and thus students have developed that same drive to learn. COVID has presented a unique challenge, but not an impossible roadblock. Pullam staff and students have shown that with the power of momentum COVID has not been a barrier to the educational process. With years of success, all stakeholders have the determination and momentum necessary to persevere and maintain high goals and achieve successes.

As soon as Pullam heard the news of the possible school closures, administration was proactive and met with all teachers to ensure that students were taking an electronic device home with them prior to Spring Break. The students having their electronic devices at home facilitated the transition from face-to-face instruction to remote learning.

Through the pandemic, teachers have supported each other and built strong collaborative teams. These collaborative teams sustain and ensure that only the best practices, strategies, and innovative technologies are implemented for student learning. The high expectations that teachers set for themselves and their students ensures that only the best core instruction is delivered to students. The supportive practices at Pullam are transmissible to parents and families where communication and collaboration remains a priority. Parents receive daily updates through different communication platforms and receive phone calls from teachers regarding their child's progress, ensuring student success. In addition, they receive technology support that facilitates instruction at home and emotional support that enables parents to help their children succeed in this new and unmapped way of delivering instruction. Despite the pandemic and school closures, Pullam has found ways to keep parental involvement at a peak, all while managing safety and health protocols.

Pullam's cohesive and supportive culture has helped students and families overcome the struggle of the unexpected, high-stress situation faced. It has remained consistent and safe for students. Pullam's unity and rapport is not something that happens by luck or accident. It all starts at the top with a dedicated school leader with a vision and impetus that radiates to all. For Pullam, deliberately creating a community where everyone supports each other has ensured a premium level of excellency that is hard to disregard. Teachers and support staff rose to the challenge and maintained their high expectations for students all while being caring and understanding, at a time where many found it difficult and nearly impossible to continue.